

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20510

April 10, 2020

The Honorable Steven T. Mnuchin
Secretary of the Treasury
U.S. Department of the Treasury
1500 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20220

The Honorable Michael R. Pompeo
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Secretary Mnuchin and Secretary Pompeo:

We write to urge you to take immediate actions to respond to the outbreak of COVID-19 in Iran. As of April 10, 2020, Iran has the seventh highest number of confirmed cases of COVID-19 and the sixth highest number of deaths related to the virus.

We are concerned that lifting sanctions would likely benefit corrupt components of the Iranian government disproportionally over delivering much-needed relief to the Iranian people. At this time, we encourage the Administration to consider alternative actions to help the Iranian people in their fight against COVID-19. Specifically, we ask the Treasury Department to issue clear guidance to foreign banks regarding the legality of certain humanitarian transactions with Iran, such as trade in medical devices and personal protective equipment. We appreciate the Department's April 9, 2020 statement on ensuring the international flow of humanitarian aid through legitimate channels, and we urge the Department to issue additional detailed guidance on Iran sanctions in particular. The State Department should also pursue public diplomacy efforts to support and encourage non-governmental organizations who are working to combat COVID-19 in Iran.

U.S. sanctions on any country and in particular on Iran produce a chilling effect on all international transactions – even legal ones – with that country. This chilling effect is part of the reason why U.S. sanctions can be effective, but it also compels us to be even more transparent and vocal about which transactions will violate our sanctions and which are permissible as the world battles a deadly pandemic. We believe articulating the exemptions to U.S. sanctions clearly and often are important to maintaining international support for U.S. sanctions on Iran while at the same time helping the Iranian people and the broader region fight COVID-19.

As members of the United States Congress, we stand ready to help the Administration in this effort and thank you for your attention to this urgent matter.

Sincerely,



Christopher A. Coons
Senator



Dean Phillips
Member of Congress

/s/

Robert P. Casey, Jr.
Senator

/s/

Jamie Raskin
Member of Congress

/s/

Rick Larsen
Member of Congress

CC: Brian Hook, U.S. Special Representative for Iran
William Barr, United States Attorney General